

Boy Scout Tour Prompts Story of Life-Saving NOAA Weather Radio All Hazards Warning

Boy Scouts who used a NOAA Weather Radio All Hazards receiver to warn them of an approaching tornado recently visited the Weather Forecast Office (WFO) in Des Moines, IA, and shared their story.

On May 21, 2004, the Boy Scouts were hiking on a trail near the small north central Iowa town of Bradgate when darkening skies to the west prompted the assistant Scout Master Rev. Kevin Weeks to turn on his NOAA Weather Radio. The radio broadcast alerted the Boy Scouts that a tornado warning had been issued and that they were in the path of the storm. The troop quickly ran a half mile to the nearest lighted house in Bradgate and took shelter with the homeowner in the basement minutes before the F2 tornado hit. The Boy Scouts escaped injury free and later returned to Bradgate to help with the post storm clean up.



Forecaster Rodney Donavon and the Bradgate Boys Scouts at WFO Des Moines, IA.

Meteorologist Rod Donavon led a presentation and tour of the office during the scout group's visit. The presentation included radar data of the May 21, 2004, tornadic supercell, displayed on the Weather Event Simulator (WES), storm chaser video, and damage survey photographs and results. Donavon demonstrated how NEXRAD radar is able to detect rotation in thunderstorms and how the decision to issue a tornado warning is made. The scouts were later introduced to the Interactive Forecast Preparation System (IFPS) and briefed on the seven-day forecast before making a final stop at the observational equipment. Donavon said the scouts were very enthusiastic about weather and asked numerous questions on a variety of subjects.

For additional information regarding the tornado that struck Bradgate, refer to the [storm survey](#) on the WFO Des Moines web site.